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CIA Mum on KGB Defector

Soviet Is 'Extremely Valuable,' Report Says

Associated Press

The Central Intelligence Agency is keeping secret the existence of a high-ranking Soviet intelligence agent who defected last year, U.S. News & World Report magazine says in its Feb. 3 edition.

The middle-aged major general is a member of the KGB intelligence agency and was smuggled out of East Germany by helicopter in late April or early May, then brought to the United States and eventually settled in the Midwest, the magazine reported.

CIA spokeswoman Kathy Pher-

son said the agency would not comment on the report. An intelligence official who asked not to be identified, said of the magazine report: "We know of no such guy."

The magazine quoted sources as saying the defector was "extremely valuable" and a "strong and steady" personality, unlike Vitaly Yurchenko, the Soviet who defected last year only to later claim he was kidnaped. Yurchenko was allowed to return to the Soviet Union. The CIA was criticized for its role in debriefing and sheltering defectors after Yurchenko redefected.

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